At its most recent meeting, the ARRL Executive Committee has directed the HQ staff to resume accepting a limited number of appointments to the Official Observer (OO) program, as necessary and where needed, under the current rules and standards.

In 2015, following the FCC’s decision to reduce the number of its Field Offices and Field Agents, the Executive Committee of the ARRL’s Board of Directors authorized a review of the OO program. At that time, the FCC had approached the ARRL about revamping its OO program to create a more efficient, highly trained group that could assist the FCC in its efforts.

Anticipating a much quicker resolution, the working group for this project decided to suspend new appointments of OOs and OO Coordinators until the new program, with its expected new requirements and regulations, was put in place. The group did not anticipate the length of time it would take to bring the proposal through the approval and implementation process. It should be noted that even during the time period when new appointments have not been made, the more than 700 existing OOs remain on the job and the OO program remains in effect.

During this extended period, concerns have been raised from the ARRL Field Organization about existing vacancies in the OO program. As a response, the Executive Committee feels that a limited number of appointments should be allowed at this time. Even with this action, any new OO appointments are being made with the understanding that a new program is coming, with new requirements and new standards for OOs.

For more than 90 years, the ARRL Official Observer program has aided thousands of amateurs in maintaining their transmitting equipment and keeping their operating procedures in compliance with FCC regulations. The OO program, as part of the Amateur Auxiliary, has been working directly with the FCC’s Enforcement Bureau since the mid-1980s. High standards of operation benefit the entire amateur radio community, and everyone’s continued cooperation is appreciated.